A Briefe Summe
OF
DIVINITIE,

Shewing

The plaineſt way, how a man ought to examine his waies in this life, to the attainment of ETERNITIE.

Wherein

The whole Doctrine of Chriſtian Libertie is briefly handled, and may ſerve for inſtruction of all ſuch as deſire to exerciſe their Guifts aright, which are in theſe our daies very much abuſed.

Publiſhed by G. DOWNHAM: B of D.
Miniſter of the word of God.

PROV: 8.32. *Now therefore harken unto me, O yee children, for bleſſed are they that keep my waies.*

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TO THE CHRISTIAN READER.

THE creation of our first Parents in the image of [a] GOD, was blest with foure excellencies. 1. Reasonable and immortall soules or spirits, called [b] the life of men. 2. Divine knowledge [c], true wisdome, [d] and holinesse [e], adorning their soules, wherein especially they resembled their Creator. 3. Bodies endued with beauty, strength, and immortality, [f] answerable to their soules. 4. Dominion over the creatures [g]. When created holinesse without teinture or sinfull blemish shined in them, they conversed familiarly with the God of glorious majestie, their corporall nakednesse (not having trāsgressed) caused not their confusion of face, the perfection of all parts added thereunto a glorious seemlinesse and decencie. God in them found absolute contentment [i], they in God enjoyed a full fruition and assurance of the favourable blisfull presence [k]. Adams sanctity by creation, his own innocency and integrity before his prevarication, gave him to name [l] the sonne of God. This son-ship was accompanied with power dispositive, and ability preparative, with skill and will, and strength

a Gen. 1. 26.
b Job. 10. 12.
c Jo. 1. 4.
d Col. 3. 10.
e Ps. 51. 6.
f Eph. 4. 24.
g 1. Cor. 11. 7.
h Gen. 1, 26.
i Gen. 1. 26.
k Psal. 17. 15.
l Luk. 3. 38.

strength of grace to doe that which was pleasing to Almighty God. The naturall sonnes of mortall men, having (by originall corruption, traduced from the loynes of Adam) lost this liberty unto that which is good, and contracted to themselves an aptnesse and proclivity unto all manner of evills, they can be but, as our Saviour saith m, workers of iniquitie. They cannot think a good thought, (for that is gratia infusa;) nor speak a good word, (for that is gratia effusa;) nor doe a good work, (for that is gratia diffusa.)

m Math. 7. 23.

We that are Saints by calling, and the sonnes and daughters of a heavenly Father by spirituall regeneration, are by our naturall birth abominably defiled with the bloud of originall corruption. Our Fathers were Amorites, our Mothers Hittites. In this state there is none that doth good, no not one. In many things (saith S. James) wee offend all: nay, in all things we sinne all, comming short of the glory of God, that is, of that righteousnesse and holinesse which leadeth unto glory. And albeit no man can justifie his owne integrity, saying, Mine heart is cleane, and my righteousnesse compleat and perfect, yet a renued justified child of grace, from whom the Lord hath taken away the a blinded minde, misleading the understanding b; that pravity of nature, which benummed c or abused the conscience d; enthralled e and hardened the will; disturbed, and disordered the affections f, and having rectified and renued those corporall senses, which were trecherous

Ezek 16 3
Jam. 3. 2.
a Eph, 4. 17, 18, 19.
b Isay 44. 20.
c Tit. 1. 15
Eph. 4. 19
d Mar. 10. 20.
2 Cor. 87.
e Rom, 7. 23. 6, 20.
f Jam. 4. 1
Gal. 5. 17
Job. 15, 16

cherous Porters g *to let in sinne unto the soule, or forward instruments to execute it* h. *This* New-borne Christian, *who hath not only the restraining, but renuing spirit, he may in a qualified sense be said not to commit sinne. For,*

g Math. 5. 29. 30.
h Rom. 3. 13. 6. 12. 13.

1 *His sinnes committed are not imputed, because in Christ he is justified.*

2 *Comparatively he is no sinner but a Saint, his errours and irregularities not resembling for nature and degree others foule enormities.*

3 *The* New borne Christian *seldome sinneth purposely, never plenary, With full and pleasing consent; neither totally and finally unto the end, because his seed remaineth in him.*

1 Joh. 3 9

How farre Gods generall providence in the effectuall restraining power of the spirit, worketh in them to preserve them from sinne, and of what force the grace of regeneration is unto them, to keepe them unspotted of the world, and prepare them for growth unto full holinesse, thou hast (courteous Reader) herein described & discovered unto thee.

Make use of this Modell of Divine instructions, apply the meditations thereof to thine owne heart and conscience, then Gods grace prevailing in thee shalt thou not be indulgent to thy sinfull corruptions, as others unrenued; but intercept the course, and stop the floudgates of sinfull concupiscence, from making an inundation to overspread thy soule: then shalt thou not favour sinne, foster, or harbour it within thine heart, but de-

testing, resist it couragiously: being at any time through thine owne infirmities, and Sathans temptations, drawne to commit sin, thou shalt doe it unwillingly, grieve for it heartily, weepe with Peter *bitterly, endevouring constantly for the time to come, to hold fast thine innocencie, to preserve thine integritie, and in all things to approve thy selfe unto thy heavenly Father, by a gracious antipathie and contrariety unto sin, by holinesse of affection, and pliablenesse of imitation, so from thy religious conversation shalt thou reap the blessings of this life, health, wealth, peace, and prosperity; grace, joy, godly contentment, the assurance of thy sinnes remission, and soules salvation: howsoever, in the life to come thou shalt be sure to receive thy reward, having purged thy selfe as God is pure, and beheld Gods face in righteousnesse, in the resurrection when thou awakest, thou shalt be satisfied with his image, and by beholding of it, shalt be changed into the same from glory to glory. Farewell.*

Thine in the Lord Jesus,

G. D.

An Examitation of a mans eſtate before God.

COLOSS. 4.8.

Whom I have ſent unto you for the ſame purpoſe, that he may knowe your eſtate and comfort your hearts.

THE eſtate of a man before God is the relation that he ſtandeth in unto God, as God is the free fountaine of all ſpirituall life and ſalvation, and the determiner of mens everlaſting conditions, either in heaven or hell: So that when we queſtion about a mans eſtate, we queſtion, Whether he be in Chriſt or not; Whether he have true grace, yea or no; Whether he be one of Gods children or no; or whether hee be yet no better then a reprobate. What a mans eſtate before God is.

There be three things to be conſidered in this definition of every mans eſtate. Firſt, it is *a relation unto God*; not as a man is in himſelfe, it may be rich, it may be poore in the world; but I ſpeake here as he is in relation towards God, Whether he be rich towards

God, yea or no, I doe not speake as a man in regard of others; it may be he is a father or a sonne, a master or a servant, a king or a subject: but in relation to God, Whether Gods servant or no, Gods child or no. *Salute Apelles*, saith Paul; and he telleth us in what estate *Apelles* was in before God, namely, in an estate of approbation, *approved in Christ*. And the same Apostle speaketh on the contrary of the unconverted Gentiles, that they were *strangers from the life of God*, Ephes. 4. 18. Secondly, As it is a relation unto God, so it is a *standing* relation: That wherein he standeth towards God, that is a mans estate before God. There is a difference betweene one that doth sin and one that is in the state of sin: A child of God may sinne, but he is not in a state of sin: you cannot call him a wicked man. So also there is difference betweeue one that doth some good actions and one that is in a good estate: A carnall man may doe some good things, but he is not in a good estate. The estate of a man is a standing thing, it is the relation that he standeth in towards God. Thirdly, It is the relation that a man standeth in towards God *as hee is the free fountaine of spirituall life and salvation*. It is not every standing relation towards God: For a man may be considered in relation to God as a Creatour, and so the heavens and the earth and the very brute beasts stand in relation to God as they are his creatures; but they

Rom. 16. 10.

Eph. 4. 18.

they have not this eſtate that we ſpeake of, which is a relation to God as the free giver of ſpirituall life and ſalvation (He is free, he may chooſe whether he will give it or no.) Now this is a mans eſtate, the relation hee ſtandeth in unto God, Whether the Lord hath given him his ſaving grace, yea or no; ſpirituall life in Chriſt Jeſus, yea or no; title to heaven and ſalvation, yea or no? This is the meaning when we ſpeake of a mans eſtate. It is ſaid of Sodom, *They were ſinners before God:* that is, they were in a bad eſtate, a ſtate of ſinne. It is ſaid of Zachary and Elizabeth, *They were both righteous before God;* that is, they were both in a very good ſtate.

Gen. 13. 13

Luke 1. 6.

All Chriſtians believe that there is a God: It behoveth every one now to conſider in what eſtate he ſtanderh to this God. This is a great queſtion that wee which are Miniſters ought to demand of our people, to know their eſtates.

Obſerv. Miniſters are to enquire after the eſtate of their people.

Firſt, becauſe we are ſheepherds, and are bound to look well how it ſtandeth with our flock. If we doe not labour to know your eſtates, we can never look well to your ſoules. Conſider that place in the Proverbs, *Be diligent to know the ſtate of thy flock, and look well to thy herds.* Where the wiſe man firſt requireth that we ſhould looke well to our flocks, and then directeth us in the manner how, *viz.* by being diligent to know their eſtate how it ſtādeth with them.

Reaſons 1.

Prov. 27. 23.

Secondly,

Secondly, we are Gods labourers; and wee must know in what estate our work standeth: else we may labour and labour and all in vain; we may preach and exhort and call upon our people to heare and to believe and obey, and all this may still be in vain, if we doe not enquire in what estate they are. This is the reason why Paul could not forbeare sending and enquiring how it stood with the Thessalonians, in what estate they were in, how it went with their faith, whether they kept it or no, lest the tempter had tempted them, and his labour should have been in vain; for so it had been for all his preaching and teaching them, if they had not been in a good estate: therefore he sent to know.

1. Thess. 3. 5.

3. Thirdly, we are to take the care and the charge of your soules: Now then how can wee be quiet if we doe not know in what estate your soules be? A good father cannot be at quiet if he doe not know how it is with his children: How if they should be sick? How if undone? Oh it would comfort a good father to know his children to be in good case: But if it were otherwise with them, though it would grieve him much, yet he had rather know it then not; for if he know it he can better tell what to do. So it was with the Apostle; his very bowels yerned upon the Philippians, *Oh my poore people*, thought he, *I wonder what estate they be in. How if they totter? How if they miscarry?*

Philip. 2. 19.

carry? How if the devill have tempted them to sinne and to apostatize? How if they be troubled of conscience? He could never be at quiet till he knew their estate: *I trust in the Lord Jesus*, saith he, *to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort when I know your estate.* He had a great care of their soules, and therefore it would comfort his heart to know what estate they were in.

Fourthly, we are teachers, and therefore we must know the estate of our people: otherwise we are ignorant what doctrine to provide for them, what points to handle among them. Paul in this Epistle to the Colossians, knowing onely their estate in the generall, delivereth abundance of generall precepts and exhortations unto them: he describeth unto them the mystery of Christ, admonisheth them to continue stedfast therein, to embrace the preaching of the word, to beware of Philosophy and the vain traditions and sophistry of men, to take heed of doting upon ceremonies, which are all ended in Christ, to set their affections on heaven, to mortifie the deeds of the flesh, to put off the old man; he warneth them to be loving and humble: he biddeth wives doe their duties to their husbands, and husbands to love their wives; children to obey their parents, and parents to encourage their children; servants to obey their masters, and masters to deal well with their servants; all to continue in prayer, watchfulnesse, 4.

watchfulneſſe, thankſgiving, to walk wiſely towards them that are without, to be carefull of godly and holy communication. Thus knowing their eſtate onely for the generall he teacheth them in generall, and therefore now hee concludeth, as if he ſhould ſay, *I ſpeak ſomewhat generally becauſe I doe not know your eſtates in particular; and therefore I ſend to you Tychicus, a faithfull good miniſter, that he may learn your eſtates in particular, and deale with you anſwerably. It may be ſome of you want corroſives; it may be ſome of you want cordials; it may be ſome have need to be ſearched and humbled, ſome of you to be encouraged and comforted: I have ſent him to enquire into your eſtates in particular, that he may doe accordingly. Whom I have ſent unto you for the ſame purpoſe, that he may know your eſtate and comfort your hearts.*

Col. 4. 8.

Vſes.

The uſe of this is threefold.

1. *Inſtruct.*

Firſt, for inſtruction. Hence we may ſee that a miniſter doeth but his duty when he enquireth into mens eſtates how they ſtand before God: It is not prying into other mens matters; it is not buſie-bodineſſe in other mens affaires; it is not a ſpirit of medling: No, a miniſter doth but his duty when he doeth it. How can a Phyſician apply true and proper phyſick unleſſe he enquire into the ſtate of mens bodies? Now a miniſter is a phyſician to mens ſouls; and therefore he is to enquire of the ſtate of mens ſoules how they ſtand before God. They

Jer. 8. 12.

are

are men of Belial that say, *What? must the minister know all?* and, *Can there be nothing done but the minister must heare of it?* These are very evill speeches. The minister doth but his duty when he is inquisitive.

The second use may be for reproof. If it be the duty of a minister to enquire of mens estates before God, then those people are too blame that will not make known their estates. What is the reason that so many men abide in a rotten estate, but because they are loth to open truly and fully what they are to Gods ministers? Nay many are like them in the prophet *who say to the Seers, See not.* They would not have Gods ministers see what they do, nor see what they are. I confesse there be some that will open something about their estates, but will not all they know by themselves: They keep in the main; like some foolish clients who misinform their Counsell, making their case better then indeed it is, and so their cause mis-carrieth: So some keep in that which would give most light to judge of their estates: But this ought not so to be. I can tell you an example of one that being troubled about his estate before God, and some ministers being by, *Oh*, saith he, *I will tell you all that I know of my selfe; I'le not hide a syllable from you: and if I be yet no better then a wretch, I beseech you tell me plainly that I am so; and if I be in Christ, I beseech you prove it plainly unto me.*

2. *Reproof.*

Isai. 30. 10.

This

This man took a right course, and thereby through Gods mercy came in a little space to the assurance of his own blessed estate and condition.

3. Exhortation. Thirdly, for exhortation. Let Gods ministers know of your estates, that they may be able to speak to you accordingly. By this means they may speak words in due season, and likewise house-holders give every one his portion. If you had but a cut finger, would not you be glad to have the right plaster? and if you had a burning fever, would you not desire the right remedy? How much more in curing the sickness of the soule.

Now from the text it self without any cutting up of the words, wee may gather foure propositions:

1. That there is an estate that every man is in, either an estate of grace, or an estate of sin.

2. That this state may be known.

3. That every man should be willing to have his estate examined, that it may be known whether it be good or no.

4. That a man can never have true comfort till it bee known that hee is in a good estate.

Observ. 1 1. For the first, That there is an estate that every one is in, either of grace or sin; See *Act.* 8.23. this in Simon Magus: *I perceive*, saith S. Peter, *thou art in the gall of bitternesse and in the bond of*

of iniquity. See, he telleth him what eſtate he was in, *viz.* a very bad eſtate, in a deſperate and damnable condition. In this ſtate of ſin and miſery are all they that are not renewed by Chriſt Jeſus. And for the other ſee an example, Rom. 16.7. *Salute Rufus choſen in the Lord:* The text there telleth us what eſtate he was in, a very good eſtate; He was a man in Chriſt, *a choiſe man*, that is, a man in the ſtate of grace and ſalvation. In this eſtate are all they that are called and ſanctified, and made new creatures unto God. Every man is in one of the two eſtates. there is no middle eſtate which is neither the one nor the other, but in one of theſe two are all the whole world. The reaſon is, Rom. 16 7.

1. From everlaſting the world was divided onely into two ranks, either Elect or Reprobates.

2. Here in this life the world is divided onely into two companies, either Godly or Ungodly.

3. At the day of judgement the Lord will divide the whole world onely into two ſorts, either Sheep or Goats. *Math.* 25. 32.

II. For the ſecond propoſition, This eſtate may be known: Eſpecially every man may come to the knowledge of his own eſtate before God. I do not ſay that every man may know whether he be elect or reprobate: yet this I ſay too, That a godly ſoule may know that 2. *Prop.* Election may be known.

that it is elected to life. The Apostle exhorteth all that are godly *to give diligence to make their election sure*, 2. Pet. 1. 10. He that attaineth to that faith which the Apostle calleth *the faith of Gods elect*, Titus 1. 1. and receiveth the word of God, as Paul saith the Thessalonians did, and thence concludeth they were chosen of God, 1. Thess. 1. 4 5. he may attain to much assurance of his election. But though a godly man may know he is elected of God, yet for reprobation the case is not alike: 1. Because ungodlinesse is not alwaies joyned with perseverance. 2. Besides, God hath many reasons why he doth not reveal mens reprobation unto them: They would then be outragious in evill, desperate in wickednesse; there could be no order or government in humane life: Besides that, the form of Christs administration of his kingdome could not be so as it now is; for Christ hath bid his ministers preach the Gospel to every creature, to whole parishes and towns, and except none: Christ will not tell his ministers which be reprobates and which not; that they may preach unto all, and labour to work upon every soul; and there is none in a parish but the minister must look upon him as one who may be saved: Christ will not tell his people which be reprobates, that they may look upon every one as one that may be wonne to the faith for any thing they know. Christ will not tell the reprobates themselves

themselves that they are reprobates, that every one of them may come to the use of the means; How do: they know but they may finde grace? Yea, and the Lord doth seriously call them; and it is their fault if they obey not. It is Gods infinite mercy, that election, which is such a comfortable point, may be revealed to Gods children, and that reprobation, which is so intolerable and bitter, is not revealed to the reprobate. Nevertheless let me adde That some particular men have known their own reprobation, as Cain and Judas, &c. And there be shrewd signes of it: (I doe not speak it as though I meant to perswade any man that he is one, but onely that he may take heed of them. Shred signes of it

1. Maliceing the known truth is a very shrewd signe: As, when men know that godlinesse is pleasing to God, and yet they hate a man for it; when men knowe the minister is commanded to rebuke sin, and yet they will spite him for so doing: this is a very shrewd signe: Paul persecuted the truth; *but yet*, saith he, *I obteined mercy because I did it ignorantly*, 1.Tim.1.13. intimating that if he had done it against knowledge he had been in danger to have found no mercy. And therefore yee that mock and hate those waies which God hath commanded, I beseech you, take heed lest yee sin unpardonably.

2. Absolute apostasie is a shrewd signe

too of reprobation: When men have been very forward in the profession of the truth, and fal totally away and prove miserably profane, as the Apostle sheweth, Heb.6.6.

3. Finall impenitency. This is an infallible signe of reprobation, when a man liveth in sin, dieth in sin, and goeth away without repentance. *Luk.*13.3. *Except yee repent yee shall likewise perish.* There be many of us have stood out long in impenitency; let us take heed lest if we stay any longer we fall upon this great evill.

That a man may know his estate proved.

I return to the point: A man may come to the knowledge of his owne estate before God. I doe not mean, Whether he be in the state of election or reprobation; but he may know, Whether he be in the state of salvation or damnation, that is, Whether he be in the way that leadeth to heaven or hell, Whether he be in such a case that if he die now he shall be saved or not saved: Every man may thus know in what estate he is.

Reasons I.

1. Because the word of God sheweth a man this: As for example, *Hee that committeth sin is of the Devill.* Mark; the Apostle telleth us what estate that man is in that liveth in sin, in a very bad estate. So on the contrary; *Hee that hath his hope purgeth himselfe.* Mark; the Apostle telleth us what estate that man is in who purgeth himselfe; he is in a very good estate, in e state of true hope in Christ. And so

1.*Joh.* 3.8

1.*Joh.* 3.3.

ſo 1. Cor. 6. 10. the Apoſtle nameth divers who are not in the ſtate of ſalvation but of damnation: if they die in ſuch caſe they cannot inherit the kingdome of heaven. So that if a man will but ſearch the word, and believe that God doth ſay true, he may know his eſtate.

II. 2. Without this knowledge a man cannot have an accuſing or an excuſing conſcience in reſpect of his eſtate: but men may have, yea many men have, a conſcience accuſing them of being in a very bad eſtate; and many men have an excuſing conſcience that plainly doth witneſſe that they are in a very good and gracious eſtate. *I and my people are wicked*, ſaith Pharaoh. His conſcience did accuſe him of being in a bad eſtate. *I am holy*, ſaith David; *I am thy ſervant*. His conſcience told him he was in the ſtate of grace. So that yee need not goe far to know what eſtate you are in: there is that in your boſome that can decide the matter. *Exod. 9. 27* *Pſal. 86. 2*

III. 3. Men cannot deſire nor flie from an unknown eſtate: But men are commanded to flie from a bad eſtate, and ſeek out a good one: Therefore they may know the one and the other. *O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flie from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance*, ſaith John to the Phariſees. He ſuppoſeth theſe men might eaſily know that they were in a very bad eſt, or elſe how could he ſay thus unto them? *Mat. 3. 7. 8.*

Before I come to the Uſes let us conſider theſe three things.

1. That every man living is borne in a very bad eſtate. We all know it well; but oh that we would conſider it! We are all by nature children of wrath. Now here lieth the queſtion, When did wee change our eſtates? We are in the ſame ſtate of damnation wherin we were born, except we are come out of it. I ſay, here lieth the queſtion, Whether we are come out of it or no, whether wee have mended our eſtate.

Eph. 2. 3.

2. Conſider that the greateſt part of the world never mend their eſtates: But as they were born in a curſed eſtate, ſo they live & die in it. And I ſpeak not this of heathen onely; but alas! how many in the viſible Church doe ſo? How many were there in the Church of Philippi whom the Apoſtle could not think of without weeping when he conſidered in what eſtate they were. So in the Church of Corinth, not many wiſe, not many rich, not many noble called; but commonly the meaneſt in the eye of the world were in the beſt eſtate towards God. Nay more then ſo: Many of them who ſeek to get into a good eſtate miſſe of it and periſh. See *Luke* 13 24 *Strive to enter in at the ſtraight gate*: Mark; it's a ſtrait gate, and letteth but few in: *for many ſhall ſeek to enter in & ſhall not be able.* Here and there a few even where the conſtant miniſtery is.

Phil 3. 17. *Cor.* 1.

3. Conſider that it is a marvellous hard thing to paſſe from ſtate unto ſtate, from a bad

bad to a good eſtate. There is a very vaſt gulf between the ſtate of ſin and the ſtate of grace, and it is marvellous hard to paſſe it. Theſe things premiſed, the uſes follow.

1. This point may be many waies uſefull. Firſt, for inſtruction. If God hath made it impoſſible unto us to find out what eſtate every one of us is in, then ſure he would have us go about it and enquire after it. God might have left us to periſh in our naturall blindneſſe, never to have known in what caſe wee had been untill we were paſt recovery. Firſt, wee are all wanderers from God and from the waies of peace; and therefore God might juſtly have ſuffered us for ever to have wandred, and never to have been able to find out whether we had been right or wrong. Secondly, God hath dealt ſo with ſome: He hath ſuffered ſome to go on all their daies blindfold to hell. Thus the Lord dealt with the Scribes and Phariſees; *Let them alone*, ſaith he, *they be blind leaders of the blind: and if the blind lead the blend, they will both fall into the ditch.* Yee ſee the Lord hath dealt ſo with ſome; and it is his mercy he hath not dealt ſo with us. Sith God hath made it poſſible for us to know, it is our duty to enquire after it: And that yet further for theſe reaſons: *Vſe* 1. *Of Inſtruction.* It is every mans dut to enquir after his eſtate. *Mat.* 15.14

1. Firſt, becauſe the Lord commanded it: *Examin your own ſelves whether ye be in the faith prove your ſelves: know ye not your own ſelvs, how* *Reaſons* 2. *Cor.* 13.5

that Jesus Christ is in you, except yee be reprobates? Where yee see the Apostle commandeth the duty of selfe-triall: And consider how he presseth it upon us: 1. *Doe yee not know what an estate you are in? Then examine and enquire.* 2. *Doe yee thinke yee are in a good estate? Look ye prove it, & be sure ye be not in an errour. Doe yee object yee doe not know, neither can yee know? No? then your estate is very bad: finde out some good tokens in you, except yee be reprobates.* This command makes it a clear duty.

2. But a second reason to prove it our duty to enquire what estate we are in, is, because without the knowledge thereof wee can never have any true peace in our consciences: The conscience must needs be without peace so long as wee are ignorant of what estate we are in: *Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.* Rom 5. 1. First the Apostle sheweth their estate; they were in a state of *justification*: and from the knowledge thereof they had *peace.* Wee are bound to get true peace to our consciences: Oh, what a lamentable maze are we in till our consciences have peace! And this they cannot have untill we are fully acquainted in what case we stand before God: *Acquaint thy selfe with God, and be at peace.* Job. 22. 21

3. Thirdly, we can neither be fit for any duty of Gods worship as long as we know not what estate we are in: We can never bee fit for any

any holy duty, to heare, pray, receive the sacrament: *Let a man examine himselfe, and so let him eat*, &c. First he must examin in what estate he is before he can be fit for that high service. So for repentance: *Let us search and try our waies, and turne again to the Lord*: first find our selves in an ill estate, and then return. So for joy; It is a duty to rejoyce in the Lord: but we are never fit for rejoycing till we have proved what estate we are in: *Let every man prove his owne work; so shall he have rejoycing.* We can never be fit for any duty untill we know in what estate we are in, because every duty varieth according as the estate of every man is. To instance in prayer; He that is not in the state of grace must pray one way, and he that is in the state of salvation must pray another way: the one, that he may be converted and brought home to God; the other, that hee may bee strengthned and encreased in grace. And so for the duty of hearing, &c.

1. Cor. 11. 28.

Lam. 3. 40.

Gal. 6 4.

Use 2. Of Direction.

The second use is for direction; to let us understand by what means we may know what estate we are in. there be 4 means to know this

Meanes to knowe what estate we are in.

1. By our outward and inward actions. I do not say, by our outward actions: For a man may be in the estate of hypocrisie, and yet his outward actions may be good. Neither doe I say by our inward actions alone: For a man may be in the state of selfe-deceit, and yet say his heart is good, and his meaning and minde

good. But I say, by them both put together. Our Saviour setteth it out by a tree; *every good tree bringeth forth good fruit: but a corrupt tree*
Mat. 7. *bringeth forth corrupt fruit.* So if the heart bringeth forth the fruit of righteousnesse, joy in good things, patience, meeknesse, gentlenesse, love, obedience, godly conversation, &c. These evidence a good estate: but if the heart bringeth forth deadnesse, earthlinesse, impatience, evill conversation, &c. these are corrupt fruits and signes of a very bad estate.

2. Yee may know what estates yee are in by your inclinations and dispositions, from
Psal. 119. 112. whence these actions proceed. Are your hearts inclined heaven-ward and God-ward, as Davids? Are yee bent to holinesse and selfe-deniall, &c. as a bow is bent to shoot the arrow? This is a signe of a good estate: as 1. Chron. 22. 19. there is speech of *setting the heart to seek God.* Yee know when a man will doe a thing indeed, we say *he is set on't.* It may be yee doe some good duties, make some faire offers of seeking God, but are your hearts set on't? or are they set on the world and inclined earth-ward? The inclinations of every creature in the world doe ever shew what the creature is. How doe we know that a stone is heavy? Because it inclineth downward. How do wee know that a man is cholerick? Because he is inclined unto wrath. So a mans estate may bee known by his constant inclination either to good or evill.

3. One

3. One may know what eſtate he is in by reflexive act which is proper onely to man. There is an act in mans ſoul (we call it a *reflex act*) which no creature hath but onely man, whereby he can perceive what himſelfe is and doeth. When a man thinketh or ſpeaketh, hee can reflect upon himſelf and perceive what he thinketh or ſpeaketh: when he prayeth, he can reflect upon his own heart, and perceive how it carrieth it ſelf all along in his prayers. I ſay no creature in the world hath in it this reflexive act but only man. The fire burneth, but it cannot reflect upon its own burning: *Oculus non videt ſe videre*, The eye ſeeth, but it doth not ſee that it doth ſee; that is, That creature doth not perceive what it doeth when it ſeeth. But every man hath this reflexive act in him, whereby he is privy to what himſelf thinketh, doeth, is. *None knoweth the things of a man ſave the ſpirit of a man that is in him.* This is the reaſon why ſome know not what eſtate they are in, becauſe they choake their owne ſpirit, and hoodwink their conſciences. Thine own heart knoweth how it is with thee, and would faithfully tell thee if thou wouldſt enquire of it and hearken unto it. Search with Gods candle, and thou maiſt eaſily find what is in thee. *The ſpirit of a man is the candle of the Lord, ſearching all the inward parts of the belly.* 1. Cor. 2. 11. Prov. 20. 27.

4. Ye may know what eſtate ye are in by a certain kind of feeling. As there is a kinde of

of bodily feeling whereby every man knoweth the estate of his body whether he be sick or in health, so there is a spirituall feeling. The
Luk. 24:32 two Disciples did feel their hearts burn: Paul
Eph. 4. 19. did feel a great combate in him between the flesh and the spirit: So if men be covetous and worldly, they may feel it. Yet indeed some men be past feeling; Their case is the worse because they cannot feel how bad it is: But for the most, they may easily feele what their estate is.

Vse 3. *Impediments.* The third use is, to shew you the impediments that hinder this knowledge. If you would attain to know what estate you are in, then remove the impediments; which are

1. Vain thoughts. Men who are in a state of sin and wrath, yet have many vain thoughts lodging within them keeping them from knowing it: *God is mercifull*; and *Christ died for sinners*; and, *There be worse sinners then they; why should they think so ill of themselves?* and, *they may be better all in good time:* These vain thoughts hoodwink their eyes that they cannot see their estate, nor resolve that it is so
Jer. 4. 14. dangerous as indeed it is. *O Jerusalem, wash thy heart from wickednesse: how long shall these vain thoughts lodge within thee?* They were in a very bad estate; & yet they had such vain thoughts that they could not see it.

2. Presumption is another impediment. Men pray, and heare, and doe other good duties,

duties, and so take all to be well without serious examining. This was the case of the Laodicean people. They thought they had that in them which they had not, and that their estate was good, when it was nothing so. Rev. 3.17.

Another let is the Cares of this life: Whereby the heart is so occupied that it doth not find to search its own estate. Therefore our Saviour saith, *Take heed that your hearts be not overcharged with the cares of this life, lest that day come upon you unawares*; intimating that these cares are great lets from considering our estates. Luk. 21.35

4. Another let is an Evill conscience: which affrighteth a man so soon as he beginneth to stirre, and maketh him afraid to go on to look soundly into his estate. *He that doeth evill hateth the light* Joh. 3.20. Rom. 3.11

5. Another let is Ignorance. *There is none that understandeth, none that seeketh after God.* Mark; they did not seek in what case they stood before God because they did not understand.

6. Another let is Spirituall sloth and sluggishnesse of heart. Men cannot endure to take paines with their own hearts till they have made out a true judgement in what case they are: They begin and quickly give over; and so for want of diligence and paines-taking make nothing sure.

The last use is for exhortation; That all men

men would bestirre themselves and set in earnest upon this enquirie. That we may every one know in what state we stand.

1. Consider, this is an enquiry about our souls. We enquire about our outward man, about the estate of our bodies, and worldly affaires, &c. oh, let us not neglect this main enquiry, *Am I in Christ, yea or no? Am I a new creature, yea or no? Doth my soule live to God or no?*

2. Consider, this is a question about our everlasting estate. We can never have comfort untill we have put this out of question, and therefore this is a question which all questions must give way unto. If ye be not in Christ, ye had need lay aside all, and look about it only. How can men eat, drink, sleep, &c. sith the wrath of God abideth upon all unbelievers? Me thinks our souls should take no content, do nothing else but faint after Christ, untill we know our interest in him. I say again, This is the grand enquiry, that businesse which all businesses must give place unto. Oh, the sloth of our souls! Let us in time awake and rouse them up, and never rest untill we know our own estate to be good before God, that so our hearts may have comfort, and that with God,

FINIS.